Puss In Boots

There was once a miller who had three sons. When his end was near, he gathered them close to him and said:

"My sons, it your turn now to take the reins. You, my eldest child, shall have the windmill. You, my next elder, shall have the donkey. An you, my little Benjamin ... will have the cat."

On the death of their father, the three sons got what he had said.

The youngest son was crestfallen at having inherited the cat. He berated himself and said, "What am I going to do with such a ridiculous gift? I suppose I can eat him when I'm starving and sell his skin for a few sous ... After that, I'll probably starve to death!"

The cat, who had heard everything, said to him. "Now, now, Master. No need to cry like that. Get me a big sack and a pair of boots."

Without being astonished that his cat could talk to him, the young lad went and fetched what was asked for.

The cat put on the boots, took up the sack and left for the forest.

He lay the sack down, which he had transformed into a trap, and waited. He didn't have to wait long before a stunned hare was swallowed up inside it, and the cat had only to pull the strings to trap it.

The cat went along to the king's palace, who lived not far away, and asked to see him.

He was received by the king in person, and after a few reverences, said to him, "Sire, my master the Marquis de Carabas gives you this hare as a gift. He caught it himself on his own grounds.”

The king accepted the present and asked the cat to thank his master for him.

The next day, the cat caught two partridges that he brought to the king, still on behalf of the Marquis de Carabas. Throughout the next week the cat brought the king the products of his hunting.

At the end of the week the cat found his master and said to him, "Master, today you will bathe in the river."

The young lad, still not astonished at a talking cat, did as he was told.

While he was splashing about in the water, he heard the noise of a horse-drawn carriage and his cat crying out:

"Help, Help! My master the Marquis de Carabas is drowning!"

The king, who was passing by, ordered his men to stop the carriage and go to the river. He asked his people to help the Marquis de Carabas. To cap it all, explained the cat, the brigands had stolen the master's clothes. The king had someone look for a new suit of clothes for the Marquis.

The young lad, once he was finely dressed, was quite a handsome chap. He approached the carriage to thank the king and noticed the princess. He mumbled a few words and the king, who noticed that his daughter had taken quite a shine to the lad, said to him:

"Marquis, won't you join us?"

He couldn't believe his luck, and sat himself in the carriage facing the princess.

Meanwhile the cat had gone on ahead. Seeing a wheat field in which some harvesters where gathering in the crop, he approached and said to them:

"When they ask you who the field belongs to, you will say it belongs to the Marquis de Carabas. If you don't, I'll see to it that you're ground into mince meat."

As soon as the carriage drew up to the field, the king asked the harvesters, "Who owns this soil?"

They replied, in a single voice, "The Marquis de Carabas."

Not far along, the cat came across some reapers sowing a field. He said to them:

"When they ask you who the field belongs to, you will say it belongs to the Marquis de Carabas. If you don't, I'll see to it that you're ground into mince meat."

The king's carriage drew up along side the reapers and asked them, "Whose land is this?"

They replied, in a single voice, "The Marquis de Carabas."

The cat continued his journey up ahead. He arrived at a castle owned by an ogre, the same ogre who owned the fields they'd just passed. He asked to see the ogre, and was granted an audience.

"My lord," said the cat addressing the ogre. "I have learnt that besides all your riches you possess a gift: The gift of turning yourself into any kind animal you choose. But, I can't quite bring myself to believe it. Perhaps, in your great generosity, you'll kindly give me a demonstration of your powers . . ."

The ogre, flattered that someone had taken quite such an interest in him, proposed to turn himself into a lion, a feat which he completed immediately.

When he resumed his original appearance, that cat thanked him profusely, and then said:

"You know how to transform yourself in a ferocious animal. But do you know how to change yourself in a small animal ... a mouse, for example?"

The ogre, proud and vain, and wanting to show off his immense power, didn't hesitate, and immediately transformed himself into a mouse.

The cat, not giving him the opportunity to transform himself back, pounced on the mouse and ate him!

He went to find the servants in the castle and ordered them to prepare a great feast for the arrival of their new master.

Soon the king's carriage arrived. Opening the door, the cat said:

"As a way of thanks, my master the Marquis of Carabas invites you to dine with him."

The king climbed down from the carriage, followed by his daughter and the "Marquis de Carabas", and was led to the castle by the cat.

During the course of the sumptuous diner, the king addressed the Marquis.

"Sir, I see that my daughter has taken quite a shine to you. You don't displease me, either. Would you do me the honour of becoming my son-in-law?"

The "Marquis" was delighted at this offer, having eyes only for the princess. He accepted the honour with joy and married her the very next day.

As for the cat, he was made a lord. He still chases mice, if only for the simple pleasure it brings him.